

COMMUNITY SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, master plans have focused on the physical attributes of a community's future development, such as land use and zoning, roads, water and sewer facilities, parks, schools, and police and fire stations. This is the proper role of the master plan as envisioned by the County Charter. The master plan is a reference document which the County Council may use when exercising its authority to establish land use policy through the adoption of zoning maps and zoning ordinances. However, to be more comprehensive, a master plan may consider not only the ways to build a harmonious, efficient physical setting, but also how related community services can foster healthy, productive citizens. *Master Plan 2010* adopts this approach.

Under the broad concept of “community services,” the following text addresses three major areas: public education, public safety, and public health and social services. These services are integral components of the county's community conservation goals. No matter how attractive the physical surroundings might be made, community conservation will falter if these services are not consistently available and of high quality. Therefore, a consideration of these services is relevant to the establishment of land use policy for the county.

These, and other statements throughout the master plan which address community services, are intended as additional guidelines for consideration by the County Council whenever it acts to establish land use policy.

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PUBLIC EDUCATION

Schools are the cornerstones of communities. The perceived quality of neighborhood schools may be the single most important factor in a family's decision about where to live. Good schools are thus an important key to maintaining healthy, stable neighborhoods. Even more important, quality schools help to ensure that the next generation of county residents is prepared for challenging employment, good citizenship, and a lifetime of self-directed learning.

Education is also a major tool to reduce poverty and create equal opportunity. The percentage of Baltimore County children under 18 years of age living in poverty has increased from 4.3% in 1970 to 7.9 % in 1993. Poverty is an important risk factor for children, indicating a greater chance of health, developmental, and behavioral problems that can prevent them from reaching their potential in school. Early intervention can make a big difference, helping to ensure that disadvantaged children grow up to become productive members of the community.

Education is broader than schooling. The Baltimore County Public Schools and other agencies provide a variety of non-instructional services that support the mission of educating children. Through public and private institutions, Baltimore County offers adults a wide range of opportunities for life-long learning and career enhancement. In addition, education that fosters civic involvement can help increase the capacity of citizens to advocate for their communities and promote positive community goals.



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Educational policy is determined by the Baltimore County Board of Education and the Board of Trustees of the Community College of Baltimore County. These policies are subject to the County's review through its budgetary procedures. Accordingly, the following policies, issues, and actions are informational statements which may provide guidance for the County Council when it acts to establish land use policy.

POLICIES

- Ensure a high quality public educational experience for all children and young adults.
- Ensure that older school buildings are safe, functional, and meet contemporary program needs.

- Balance the need to expand or add schools against the need to maintain and upgrade existing schools.
- Establish new county schools judiciously, giving priority to planned growth areas and community conservation areas.
- Recognize and address the critical impact of children's life conditions at preschool age on their future educational achievement and employment success.
- Achieve a high level of literacy for every adult in Baltimore County.
- Strengthen ties between business and educational institutions to achieve an integrated system of basic and career education, training, and retraining for all parts of the work force.
- Continue to assist students in developing an understanding and appreciation for diversity in schools and communities.
- Continue to develop schools as community centers that serve multiple functions and benefit the entire community.



ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Some of the major issues in education involve providing adequate school facilities to prevent overcrowding; support for current program needs; and the use of school facilities as centers of community life. Other issues concern the quality and scope of educational programs and support services, and adjustments that may be appropriate in response to the changing nature of the county's communities.

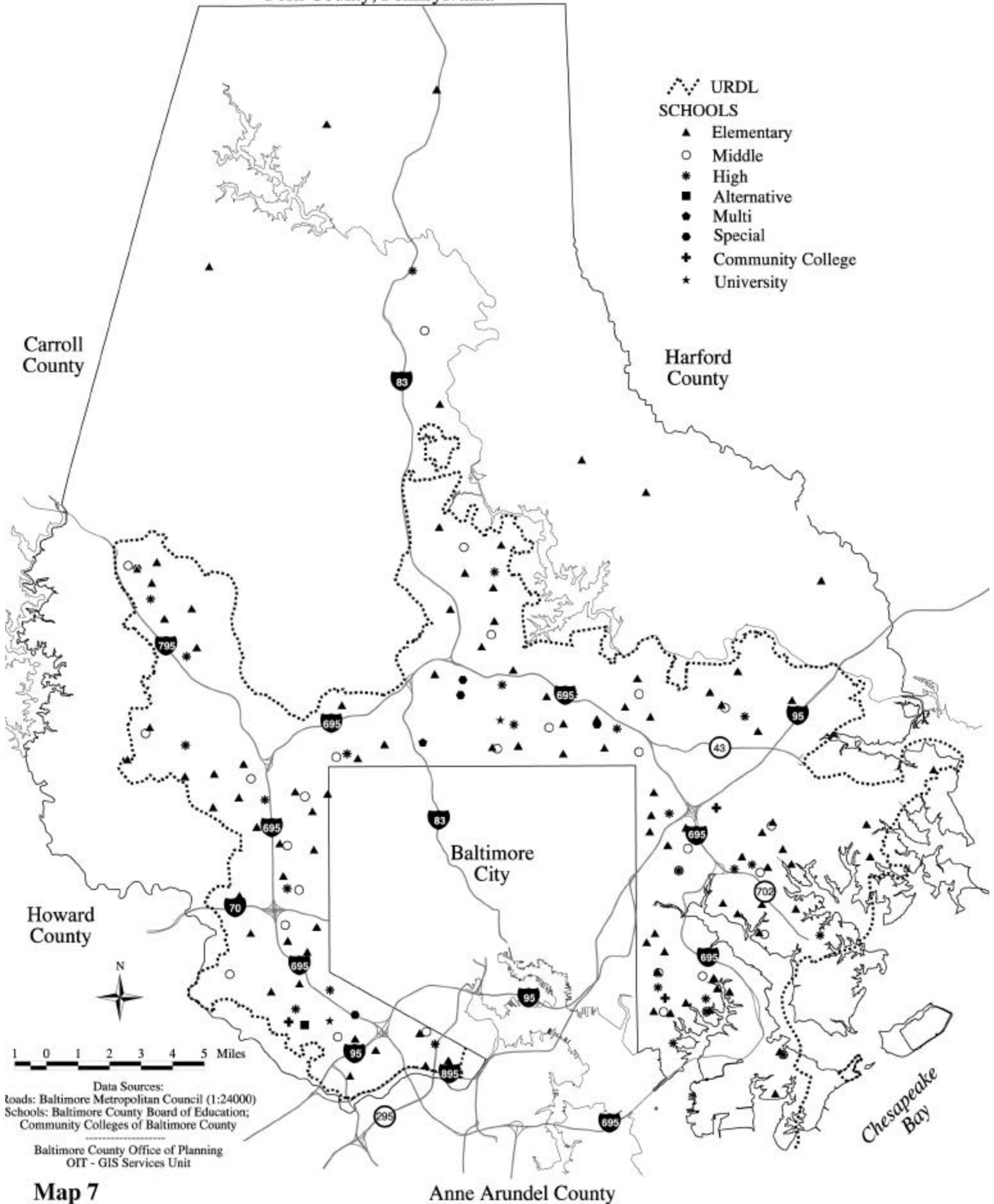
BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Baltimore County Public School system (BCPS) is the 25th largest in the United States, with a 1997-98 enrollment of 105,520 students. One hundred and sixty-one schools and almost 7,000 teachers serve the children. There are 101 elementary schools, 26 middle schools, 24 high schools, six alternative schools, and four special schools within the system. The 1997-98 school enrollment increased from its 1996-97 level by 1,051 students. The enrollment for 1998-99 was 106,300, an increase of 780 students above the previous year (Map 7). A fundamental part of the county's responsibility for public education is to provide for adequate classroom space. In the past four years, the county has funded a total of 9,000 new classroom seats in growing communities through new schools and additions.



The construction of an addition to Parkville High School is one of the many school improvements being undertaken.

York County, Pennsylvania





The Baltimore County Board of Education published a plan for the county school system in 1989 called *Great Expectations for 2000: Shaping the Vision* which takes a comprehensive approach in setting goals for public primary and secondary education in Baltimore County. In 1994, the Board of Education published an assessment of this report called *Moving Toward the Vision*. The 1996 *Baltimore County Public Schools Action Plan* describes specific actions for improving student achievement. The *School Facilities Master Plan* determines facility needs and includes relevant educational program policies.

Issue: Assessing the Need for School Construction and Renovation

Student populations tend to change in cycles, following the curve of the population as elementary school students advance to middle school and then high school. External local changes such as large-scale residential development, or younger families moving into an established neighborhood, can also affect enrollments. While it is desirable to have school enrollments at or below capacity, it is not prudent to expand a school's permanent capacity in response to a short-term growth surge. A school where enrollment is at capacity now may fall below capacity in a few years if the school-aged population in that area declines. School construction is expensive and is paid for primarily through public bond sales, which represent long term taxpayer debt. Careful assessment of alternatives, balancing current and future capacity needs, is necessary. Both new growth and neighborhood turnover must be assessed in order to balance expenditures. Magnet schools that offer specialized programs and serve multiple neighborhoods can help alleviate short-term local crowding.

Actions

1. Continue to improve methods of calculating existing student enrollment and school capacity, and for projecting future student enrollment, to ensure adequate planning for school construction and renovation.
2. Implement a comprehensive, multi-year, school-by-school, maintenance plan. This plan should be revised each fiscal year and should be based on facilities assessment data and annual maintenance requests submitted by area superintendents and principals, trade and manufacturers recommendations, and analyses by personnel in the facilities department.
3. Continue to plan and fund physical renovations that address technology needs and curricular changes in educational programs.

The county will implement a comprehensive, multi-year, school-by-school, maintenance plan.



4. Establish a phased renovation plan to bring schools into compliance with applicable accessibility codes.

Issue: Improving the Quality of Education

Nationally and locally, there is great interest in improving the quality of public education. It is imperative that Baltimore County schools retain the confidence of parents. Student scores on state achievement tests are improving throughout the county school system, and in many county schools the majority of students excel on state and national tests. However, schools in several of the county's older communities, which have substantial numbers of disadvantaged students, are not performing as well.

The 1996 *Baltimore County Public Schools Action Plan* included these steps to improve student achievement:

- Develop strategies to promote understanding of the relationships among the Essential Curriculum, curriculum units, and assessment. (The Essential Curriculum is comprised of the knowledge and skills which students are expected to have at each grade level.)
- Implement a more comprehensive assessment plan emphasizing the effective use of tools such as pop quizzes and project assignments to make instructional decisions.
- Research, implement, and communicate best practices for improving student achievement.
- Use internal and external evaluations to monitor the effectiveness of system-wide initiatives and on-going programs.
- Implement recommendations for improving minority student achievement.
- Implement specific strategies that engage parents as partners in all aspects of the learning process.
- Provide staff development that reflects the needs of new and experienced teachers and administrators in implementation of the Essential Curriculum, research-based instructional practices and assessment, and data analysis.
- Refine existing programs such as gifted and talented education, special education, magnet themes, multicultural education, reading, and values education to improve their implementation.

The state mandates that the *School Facilities Master Plan* should contain various data related primarily to facility needs but also include "other relevant

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educational program policies.” The *School Facilities Master Plan* and the action plan could serve as vehicles to communicate with citizens about educational policy.



Actions

1. Continue to assess implementation of the action plan of the Baltimore County Public Schools and convey findings to citizens.
2. Include in the *School Facilities Master Plan* a discussion of the mission, goals, action plan, and accomplishments related to student academic achievement.
3. Evaluate school academic performance, including the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), functional tests, the dropout rate, and student attendance, and implement measures to assist schools not meeting minimum standards.

Issue: Reducing Teacher Turnover Rates

Some county schools have relatively high percentages of first and second year teachers, which often reflects a high staff turnover rate. Teachers have a negotiated right to request and be granted transfers after two years in the same school. While many requests for transfer are for personal reasons, such as teachers' desire to work closer to their homes, in some cases teachers request transfers because they are dissatisfied with conditions at their school. The school system has not tracked teacher turnover in the past, but there appears to be a correlation between higher teacher transfers and a student body with a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students.

It is important to have a strong nucleus of experienced teachers in a school, particularly where discipline problems are prevalent and where many students are not prepared to perform at their grade level. While new teachers bring enthusiasm and fresh ideas to a school, veteran teachers have the experience, maturity, and reputation with students that can be invaluable in dealing with difficult or disadvantaged students. A good mix of new and experienced teachers is ideal. The school system has recently responded to the problem of teacher turnover, with early evidence of success, by providing experienced teachers as on-site mentors for first and second year teachers and/or teachers with fewer than five years of experience.



The county will strive to maintain a mix of teachers who bring experience and enthusiasm to the school.



Actions

1. To the extent possible, maintain a balance between new and experienced teachers in all schools.
2. Continue to implement and assess the teacher mentoring program; prioritize mentor assignments based on critical need as reflected by high teacher attrition, low school achievement, and assessment of student risk factors.
3. Consider ways to attract highly capable, veteran teachers to schools with low student achievement.

Issue: Using Public Facilities for Community Activities

Public facilities are hubs of communities. Public buildings, and particularly schools and libraries, are landmarks that contribute to a community's sense of identity and cohesiveness. On a practical level, they are places where a variety of civic, recreational, educational, and family support activities occur. These activities not only strengthen the community and its members, but also create positive links between the facility and the community. When parents and other community members use the public facilities on a regular basis, they develop a sense of ownership and pride in the facility, which can result in greater parental involvement in childrens' education and increased community support for the facility.

Actions

1. Continue to expand the use of school buildings, libraries, and other public buildings so they serve as focal points in the community for services and activities.
2. Foster positive links between public facilities and communities.
3. Involve the community in making decisions about the use of school buildings to ensure responsiveness to community needs.



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SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

A comprehensive approach to education recognizes that children have physical, emotional and psychological needs that must be met if they are to perform well in school and reach their potential. At school sites, the school system provides for a variety of non-instructional services that support the system's educational mission. They can include: nutritious lunches, a school-based nurse, wellness centers, guidance counselors, psychological and crisis intervention services, pregnancy reduction programs, programs for students with chronic health problems, pre-schooler evaluations and services, and before and after school care. The schools coordinate with other agencies

for many of these support services, including the Department of Health, the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Police Department, and the Baltimore County Library System (Map 8).



Issue: Ensuring School Readiness

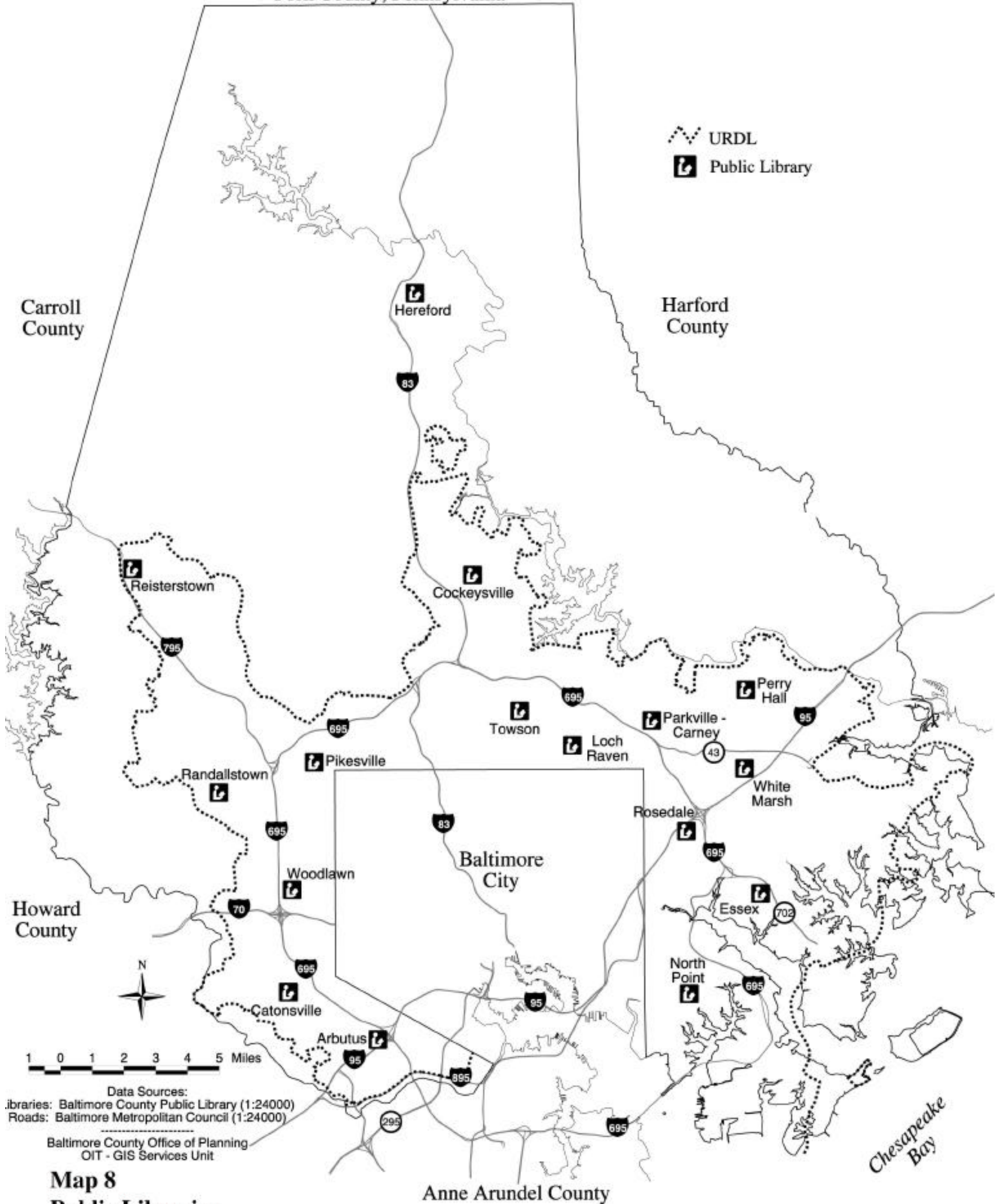
What a child experiences during the first three years of life plays a critical part in determining how the child will function in school and in later life. Proper care and intellectual stimulation of children before age three provides a good foundation for the future. Conversely, the failure to adequately nurture and stimulate young children can limit their potential to succeed. Preventable health risks such as low birth weight, fetal alcohol syndrome, lead poisoning, and child abuse or neglect can permanently limit the child's development. The Department of Health, DSS, and Baltimore County Public Schools attempt to identify the families of children at risk for various problems in order to offer appropriate services or to intervene when necessary. The Baltimore County Library System contributes significantly to ensuring school readiness through various programs and outreach efforts such as programs that help families find access to resources, with a special emphasis on reading resources for preschool children.

An estimated 23,000 children in Baltimore County from birth to age 18 do not have health insurance or are underinsured. According to a 1997 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "children with no health insurance were six times more likely to go without medical services and four times as likely to have their care delayed. We know that children with untreated illness are less able to learn and more likely to miss numerous days from school." The county has established a pilot program to identify uninsured young children, determine their eligibility for medical assistance or other medical insurance, and sign them up. The program focuses on families with children in elementary school and their siblings younger than school age and has been implemented at targeted schools in eastern Baltimore County.

The children of teenage parents are at risk for a variety of health and developmental problems. The risk may be compounded by the stresses of poverty, because adolescents are often not financially prepared for the responsibility of child rearing. While Baltimore County's adolescent birth rate is well below the national average, the several hundred children born

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York County, Pennsylvania



to teenagers in the county each year are particularly vulnerable. Offering teenage parents support services and training in effective parenting skills can help mitigate the risk these children face.



Actions

1. Support efforts at the state and federal level to expand Head Start and other early childhood education programs.
2. Continue initiatives to discourage adolescent pregnancies and to improve adolescent parenting skills.
3. Continue and expand community-based programs that support adolescent parents and their preschool children, such as the Young Parents Support Center in Essex.
4. Develop and expand educational resources for parents concerning the developmental needs of infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers, such as programs and materials provided by the county library system.
5. Strengthen and coordinate efforts to identify and assist families with children at risk.
6. Expand elementary school wellness centers to include children up to four years of age.
7. Identify uninsured children and seek to enroll them in Medicaid or other health insurance.

Issue: Educating Students with Disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment

Educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment continues to be a major challenge mandated by federal and state laws and regulations. The Baltimore County Public Schools strive to allocate resources and staff to meet the instructional needs of students with disabilities and to provide an array of special education and related services in inclusive setting within neighborhood schools. Parents are recognized as important partners in planning each child's special education program.

Actions

1. Support and expand efforts to assist classroom teachers in resolving learning and behavioral difficulties experienced by their students.
2. Provide staffing to promote education of students with disabilities in neighborhood schools and when needed in public special education schools.
3. Strengthen and coordinate efforts to provide educational services and family support to the increasing number of students with disabilities involving behavior.

Baltimore County Public Schools strive to meet the instructional needs of students with disabilities in an inclusive setting within neighborhood schools.



4. Continue to expand accessibility in the public schools.
5. Continue to promote and support involvement of parents of students with disabilities in the schools.

Issue: Reducing Student Mobility

Student mobility refers to the school's student turnover rate for the school year (September through June). Mobility occurs when students transfer to another school because they have moved out of their school's zone. During the 1997-98 school year, 23 elementary schools, nine middle schools, and eight high schools in the Baltimore County system had mobility rates of 30% or greater.

Studies show that students who move frequently do not perform as well academically as students who do not move. Mobility disrupts the student's schooling and requires frequent adjustments to a new social environment. With school-based management, the timing of the curriculum can vary from school to school, so that transfer students may miss whole subject areas while having to repeat subjects already covered.

The negative effects of student mobility are reflected in lower scores on standardized tests. Some neighborhood advocacy groups have expressed concern that, because of mobility, schools with a large number of transient students tend to have lower overall test scores. The lower scores create a distorted perception of the quality of education in the school, adversely affecting the community's desirability to prospective homeowners.

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Processing the paperwork for student transfers is difficult and often delays the student's admission to a new school. Valuable class time is lost. School administrators frequently find it difficult to get students' records, particularly those transferring from other jurisdictions. The transfer is complicated by the fact that school grading methods, school records such as report cards, and the format of individual education plans have not been standardized, particularly among elementary schools. Interjurisdictional transfers are further complicated by the fact that different school systems start the school year on different days.

Several elementary and middle schools in the Essex-Middle River area have established a "Stay Put" program intended to encourage families not to move. The main focus is to educate parents about the educational benefits

to their children of not moving. Program staff also work with apartment complex managers, who frequently offer rent incentives which induce families to move, to educate them about the benefits of having a stable tenant population and to enlist their support in promoting the value of residential stability for school children.



Actions

1. Conduct a targeted public information campaign to educate parents about the importance of keeping their children in the same school for at least a year at a time.
2. Work with rental housing property managers to reduce family mobility during the school year.
3. Interview parents of transfer students to determine why they are moving. Develop a database to help shape effective policies in response to student mobility.
4. Examine the feasibility of providing shuttle buses or other transportation for high mobility schools to keep students from having to transfer during the school year.
5. Investigate ways to standardize the paperwork and expedite the process for school transfers, both within Baltimore County and among the jurisdictions in the region, such as using an automated system that could be accessed by different school systems.

Issue: Reducing Chronic Absenteeism from School

Chronic truants may be defined as those students who are absent twenty or more days in one school year. These students have generally experienced little academic success and have failed one or more grades. They also usually lack substantial support from parents, and in many cases their parents were not academically successful. Chronic truants often have many contacts with juvenile services for a variety of offenses. They have often developed an attitude of disengagement.

The Baltimore County Public Schools, the state Department of Juvenile Justice and the Baltimore County Police Department have identified three school “clusters” where chronic truancy among middle and high school students is a serious problem. It has been the experience of these schools that techniques generally effective at boosting attendance (daily phone calls, personal contact with parents, rewards, and incentives) may not work for chronic truants.

Chronic truants have generally experienced little academic success and lack substantial support from parents.



As an alternative, Project Attend was developed and tested in the three school clusters by the three agencies. The objectives are to improve attendance among chronically truant students and reduce their contacts with police. The program involves working with each student to identify the source of the truant behavior and prepare a plan of action. Community and service agency support is provided to the student and the family to help make the plan work. The program, which was made available to all secondary schools in 1997-98, has been successful in significantly reducing both absenteeism and lawbreaking behavior by students referred to the program.

Action

Continue Project Attend where chronic truancy needs to be addressed and develop the program with site based administrators.

Issue: Reducing Dropout Rates

In Maryland, 4.03% of high school students dropped out of school in the 1997-98 school year. Over 50 percent of the state's welfare clients did not finish high school. Nationally, over 70 percent of people who are incarcerated are school dropouts. Only 11 percent of school dropouts are able to find full time jobs paying more than poverty wages. These statistics point to a serious statewide and national problem that could affect the health of Baltimore County and the well-being of its residents. Factors that contribute to students' decisions to leave school include: poverty, lack of adult support, lack of relevance of school to the child's life, lack of alternative educational models, family and financial pressures, failure in early years of school, peer group influence, and inflexible policies in the school system.

Baltimore County is fortunate to have a declining school dropout rate and a diminishing proportion of adults who did not finish high school. The 1997-98 dropout rate was 2.19%. The county should be proud of this accomplishment, and at the same time keep up the momentum, striving to get all of the county's children successfully through high school.

Actions

1. Strengthen efforts to identify students who are at risk for dropping out of school.
2. Intervene in the early grades when a child exhibits difficulty learning; effectively identify and address each child's learning barriers.
3. Continue to provide alternative venues for out of school youth to continue learning and to achieve the equivalent of a high school diploma.

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Issue: Encouraging Parent and Community Involvement in Public Education



Parents play a crucial role in their children's success at school. Regular contact between parents and teachers keeps parents aware of the child's progress and involved in setting goals, so that they are better able to help, guide, and encourage the child at home. School system policy places responsibility on the local school for actively engaging parents in their children's education.

Some parents may not be able or are not motivated to give their children the educational support they need for a variety of reasons. They may lack functional skills in basic areas such as reading and math. They may not appreciate the value of education or the importance of their role in their child's schooling.

Reading and interpreting information, completing forms, and performing mathematical calculations are tasks that most Americans need to perform on a daily basis. Yet nearly a quarter of American adults cannot accomplish even the simplest of these tasks without difficulty. These types of tasks comprise functional literacy. Poor literacy skills can limit a person's ability to get and keep a job, manage a household, assist children with homework, and handle a variety of everyday challenges, such as reading a bus schedule.

In 1998-99 the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) and the public school system jointly offered the Adult Basic Education program. In 1999-2000 the CCBC will be responsible for the program. The Adult Basic Education program provides literacy education to various groups in different settings. Some of these programs are collaborations with businesses, other county agencies, or non-profit organizations. Adult basic education classes help students upgrade their skills so that they can eventually attend a general education degree (GED) class and attain a high school diploma.

Effective communication between the school administration and communities is needed to foster community support of the public school system. The Baltimore County Public Schools maintain two types of citizens advisory groups. There are five educational advisory councils that advise the Baltimore County Board of Education and serve specific geographic areas. In addition, there are seven advisory committees (Special Education, Technology Education, Adult Education, Gifted and Talented Education, Magnet Schools, Student Service

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Learning Programs, and African American Education) that advise the superintendent.

Actions

1. Continue school-based outreach to parents and guardians encouraging them to come to the school to help plan and/or review the program of studies, grade transition, extracurricular plans, and progress of their children.
2. Continue to make parents feel welcome in their child's school by providing flexibility in scheduling conferences and by making the school building a hub of community activities and family services.
3. Provide school-based parenting programs. Involve the appropriate community agency personnel in providing training, counseling services and information to parents.
4. Continue to provide adult literacy programs, particularly to parents. Expand the school system's initiative that works with the whole family on literacy skills. Strive to attain a high level of literacy for every adult in Baltimore County.
5. Provide well-publicized forums for community input into the decision-making process on issues affecting schools.
6. To make communication between communities and the school administration more effective, review methods of appointing members to the educational advisory councils; clarify and communicate to citizens the responsibilities, authority, structure, and operating procedures of the educational advisory councils.

The skill level of the local work force is sometimes the critical factor in a company's decision to locate or remain in an area.

Issue: Providing Work Force Development

An educated work force is essential for the success of economic and community conservation goals. Gainfully employed individuals contribute significantly to the tax base and the maintenance of their homes and communities. The skill level of the local work force is sometimes the critical factor in a company's decision to locate or remain in an area. Baltimore County businesses report that the quality and availability of labor are among their top concerns. Work force education begins at the earliest stages and is based on a strong system of public education. Baltimore County provides numerous programs that address workforce education.

The CCBC offer the Adult Basic Education Program, which assists adults who have difficulty reading or writing in English or solving simple quantitative

problems. They also provide affordable classes in a wide variety of subjects for adult enrichment. The CCBC is a system of three public campuses, Catonsville Campus, Dundalk Campus, and Essex Campus, that anticipate and respond to the educational, training, and employment needs of Baltimore County and the region. The colleges offer a broad array of transfer and career programs and services, including general education, basic skills instruction, arts and science courses, career education, employment skills training, and enrichment courses.



The Baltimore County Office of Employment and Training (OET) provides a number of employment and training programs and services, including the Reemployment Assistance Center for dislocated workers, and Career Connections, a comprehensive school-to-career transition program. The center provides individualized counseling, job search and placement information, resume preparation, and workshops and seminars to address unemployment issues, and opportunities for career training.

The Baltimore County Manufacturing Training Consortium is a new initiative to recruit students for manufacturing careers and ensure that they are academically prepared for the positions available within the local manufacturing industry. The consortium is a cooperative partnership among the Community Colleges of Baltimore County, the Baltimore County Public School System, OET, the Department of Economic Development, the Regional Manufacturing Institute, and the local chambers of commerce.

Under Maryland's new Family Investment Program, which replaces the federal entitlement program Aid to Families with Dependent Children, local jurisdictions are responsible for helping clients on public assistance find jobs. The county Department of Social Services (DSS), which coordinates this effort in the county through the Baltimore County Jobs Program, provides job readiness training, structured job search workshops, and programs to serve clients with physical and mental disabilities. OET also administers occupational training programs for public assistance recipients.

The Baltimore County Library system continues to serve as the "people's university," providing materials for the ongoing development of knowledge and skills needed to compete in a changing work environment. The library has worked with OET to provide a large array of electronic resources on



Close coordination among Baltimore County's education and business communities will ensure the development of a top-notch work force.



Schools can play a special role by helping students develop into civic-minded adults who want to contribute to their communities.

employment and training opportunities available to the public over the Internet. In addition, many branches offer resume software and programs on how to conduct a job search.

Action

Continue to strengthen ties between business and educational institutions at all levels to bring about a coordinated system of basic and career education, training, and retraining for all parts of the work force. Encourage the joint development of specific internship and work study programs by businesses and schools.

Issue: Improving Civic Education Services

Citizen involvement is a critical component of maintaining strong communities. Fostering positive citizenship is a job for the whole community, including businesses, civic organizations, and government. Schools, libraries, and community colleges can provide not only informational resources to support civic involvement, such as computers and Internet access, but also physical spaces in the community where community meetings and other civic activities can occur. Schools can play a special role by helping students develop into civic-minded adults who want to make a contribution to their communities.

To be effective advocates, citizens need to be well informed about government services and functions, and they need a variety of community organizing skills. The Office of Planning, the Office of Community Conservation, and other government and nonprofit agencies can provide forums and resources to help build the organizational capacities of neighborhood associations.

Action

Facilitate citizen involvement through training in the zoning, land management, and development review processes, and in community organizing, grant writing, and leadership skills:

- Revise and expand the high school civics curriculum.
- Establish a clearinghouse for information on how to establish a community association.
- Create an information system for permits, development projects, and hearings.

- Conduct periodic seminars in conjunction with Continuing Education Programs.
- Ensure that information resources are accessible and easily understandable by the intended audience.
- Continue to expand the coordination of electronic services of libraries, schools, colleges, and other institutions in the region.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Strong communities are places where people feel safe from harm. Baltimore County's Police and Fire Departments respond to a variety of threats that put the lives, health, and possessions of citizens in jeopardy, including crime, accidents, fires, and natural emergencies (Maps 9 and 10).

The county's public safety strategy is based on prevention, so that human suffering, property damage, and the financial cost of injuries and lost work time can be effectively minimized. A prevention-oriented approach requires coordination among public and private agencies to enforce various safety standards, implement safety improvements, educate the public about safety hazards and crime prevention, and address the social and economic problems that contribute to criminal behavior.

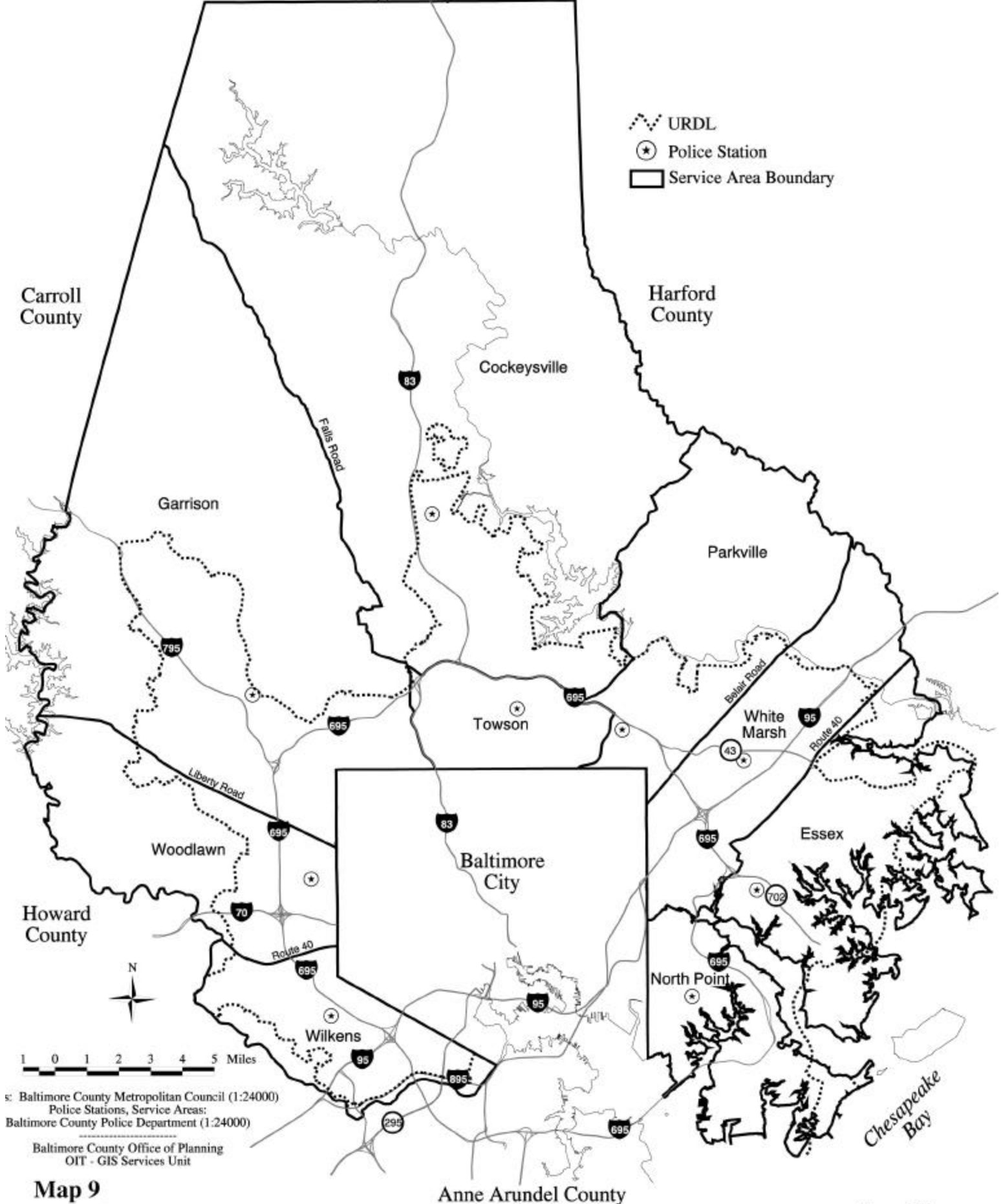
Even with the county's prevention strategy, public safety emergencies will continue to occur. The Baltimore County Police Department, Fire Department, and Volunteer Firemen's Association and its member volunteer fire, rescue, emergency medical and rehabilitation service companies provide an effective, coordinated response to these emergencies.

POLICIES

- Pursue a prevention-oriented public safety strategy that involves effective coordination among public and private agencies.
- Focus special attention on youth for crime prevention, conflict resolution, and alternative sanctions for non-violent criminal behavior.
- Enforce the law vigorously, cooperating with other regional jurisdictions and using new technologies to identify, apprehend and effectively prosecute criminals.
- Reduce the opportunity for crime by promoting safety-oriented environmental design in development projects.

The county will pursue a prevention-oriented public safety strategy that involves effective coordination among public and private agencies.

York County, Pennsylvania



s: Baltimore County Metropolitan Council (1:24000)
 Police Stations, Service Areas:
 Baltimore County Police Department (1:24000)
 Baltimore County Office of Planning
 OIT - GIS Services Unit

Map 9
Police Stations and Service Areas



- Standardize communication systems within the region.
- Continue vigorous enforcement of fire safety codes with particular attention to inspections of child care facilities.
- Continue the “Learn not to Burn” program to prevent fire related injuries to children.
- Provide Community Outreach programs to reduce accidental poisoning and head injuries for children.

Issue: Reducing Crime by Adolescents

In more than 33% of the arrests for serious crime, those arrested are juveniles. A study of juvenile arrests from 1992 through 1995 found that the peak age of juvenile offenders was 16. The four most common offenses for which young people were arrested in 1992 and 1993 were shoplifting, destruction of property, common assault, and motor vehicle theft. Marijuana possession became the fourth most common juvenile offense in 1994 and 1995, bumping motor vehicle theft to fifth place. A small number of young people are responsible for most of the juvenile crime in Baltimore County; among the juveniles arrested for crimes in 1995, 70% had prior arrest records.

A study by the State Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) reported that many juvenile crime prevention programs have failed because they focused on punitive approaches to reducing child delinquency. Positive approaches emphasizing constructive opportunities for children were found to be much more successful. The OJJDP study also found that narrow approaches to prevention taken in isolation were less effective than comprehensive approaches involving the larger community. Prevention programs were most successful when they identified and reduced risk factors.

Among the recommendations of the OJJDP study, many of them aimed at the schools, are reductions in class size for kindergarten and first grade classes, and a “continuous progress” instruction strategy which allows each child to progress at his or her own pace. The school system has established and is studying the continuous progress model at three elementary schools.

Several collaborative programs designed to prevent crime and promote positive community relations among juveniles have been established among county agencies. Probably the most well known are: the popular Police Athletic League Recreation Center (PAL) program, which provides

County agencies have established several programs designed to prevent juvenile crime and promote positive community relations.

recreational activities and adult attention to disadvantaged young people; and the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program, which involves a curriculum on drug abuse taught by police officers in county schools. Less well known is a collaboration between the police and the school system called Help Increase the Peace Program (HIPPP). HIPPP is a school-based program involving student retreats and other activities geared toward promoting conflict resolution, positive inter-group relations, and school violence prevention.



A proposed collaboration between the Police Department and the school system is the nationally recognized School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. School resource officers are specially trained police personnel who work as adjunct school staff members as well as law enforcement officials in a variety of capacities. They teach students about the lifelong effects of drug and alcohol abuse, assist school administrators in diagnosing law enforcement problems, and deter misbehavior by being visible throughout the school day and at after school activities, and build positive trusting relationships with students.

Another program called JOINS (Juvenile Offenders in Need of Supervision) targets first time minor, non-violent juvenile offenders, such as shoplifters. The program provides for restitution by young first-time offenders in lieu of criminal prosecution. Its purpose is to divert young offenders from the formal court system and prevent the recurrence of criminal behavior. The JOINS program currently focuses on two precincts, Wilkens and Woodlawn, and has been very effective.

Actions

1. Monitor and reinforce positive behaviors in school such as attendance, academic progress, and discipline.
2. Provide youth employment and vocational training programs with an intensive educational component.
3. Provide structured recreation and other activities, such as the PAL programs.
4. Provide school personnel with in-service training on classroom behavior management techniques (aggression management training).
5. Evaluate effectiveness of peer mediation; continue to provide conflict resolution and violence prevention curriculums (such as HIPPP).
6. Provide mentoring opportunities for children that include behavior management techniques.

Actions for reducing crime by adolescents include structured recreation and other activities, such as the PAL programs.



7. Expand the successful JOINS program.
8. Continue and evaluate DARE.
9. Implement and evaluate the SRO program.

Issue: Reducing Drug and Alcohol Abuse

In 1998, there were 5,048 arrests in Baltimore County for which the person arrested was charged with possession of illegal drugs. The most common drug was marijuana/hashish, followed in order by cocaine/crack, heroin, and LSD. There were 3,603 client admissions to Baltimore County drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs in fiscal year 1997, a 9% increase from fiscal year 1996.

Drug and alcohol abuse contributes to crimes such as domestic violence that threaten the life and health of citizens, and nuisance problems that undermine the quality of life and stability of neighborhoods. Substance abuse also undermines workplace productivity and the stability of families. While drunk driving has decreased, in part through effective community education efforts, alcohol is still a factor in motor vehicle fatalities. Open-air drug markets pose a major threat to the neighborhoods where they take hold, creating a negative community image that can discourage reinvestment by homeowners and businesses.

Actions

1. Work with neighborhood associations to identify people or properties involved with drug dealing.
2. Aggressively and strategically pursue sanctions against drug dealers including criminal prosecution, forfeiture of property, and enforcement of drug nuisance abatement laws.
3. Target drug buyers for arrest and prosecution to undermine drug markets.
4. Continue and expand drug treatment programs implemented through the Baltimore County Health Department so that they are widely available. Develop a plan to guide the location and management of drug and alcohol treatment programs, methadone clinics, and other similar facilities in ways that are sensitive to neighborhood concerns.
5. Undertake a public information campaign to discourage substance abuse and encourage people to get treatment.
6. Continue to expand the Maryland Student Assistance Program's identification, data collection, intervention, and referral services for students and their families.

Drug and alcohol abuse contributes to crimes and nuisance problems that undermine the stability of families and neighborhoods.

7. Continue to provide small community based prevention programs including the Substance Abuse Prevention Community Grant Empowerment Program.



Issue: Reducing Maintenance of Order Calls

Maintenance of order calls to the police involve problems such as domestic disturbances, drunk and disorderly conduct, loud parties and other noise, and loitering. These types of incidents may result in serious physical harm to people or property and they can have a damaging effect on neighborhoods. Where they persist, some neighbors eventually move away. A single household can quickly disrupt a whole block, resulting in the loss of several families, the decline of property values, and the destabilization of a community.

Actions

1. Work with community groups and landlords to reinforce sanctions against nuisance behavior.
2. Expand and publicize the Baltimore County Mediation Program, which helps to address conflicts among neighbors.

Issue: Promoting Community-Based Policing and Community Involvement

Community-based policing can assist in reducing crime and improving quality of life, particularly when police work in partnership with human service agencies, residents, businesses, and active neighborhood associations. Foot patrol officers create a visible presence on the street, which can help discourage crime. When the same officers are present in a neighborhood on a regular basis they get to know residents and can quickly determine who is involved in criminal activity. They can more readily see criminal issues in the context of the specific neighborhood and family conditions, intervening before community or family dysfunction leads to criminal behavior. Their positive interactions with youth can help to counter negative influences.

***Community-based
policing can assist
in reducing crime
and improving
quality of life.***

Punishment alone will not solve all the criminal justice problems. Social science researchers are exploring the notion that social norms play an important part in peoples' commitment to the law. People obey laws not just because they fear punishment but because they believe that government has the right to tell them how to behave and because they believe the laws are enforced fairly.



Actions

1. Continue to develop individualized strategies addressing the specific law enforcement problems faced by different communities.
2. Continue cooperative efforts among the Police Department, the Office of Community Conservation and neighborhood associations to reduce crime and revitalize older neighborhoods, including such programs as Neighborhood Watch and Citizens on Patrol.
3. Explore law enforcement strategies that employ an understanding of social norms to foster law abiding behavior and support for the police.
4. Where needed, use foot patrols to establish a consistently recognizable police presence in the community.
5. Focus on crime prevention through community building activities such as community fairs, block parties, and Pride In Our Neighborhood campaigns.

Issue: Promoting Safety through Effective Environmental Design

The physical environment influences safety. Working together, planners and safety experts have identified environmental design principles that can be applied to create “defensible spaces.” For example, parking lots should be placed in view of windows to create opportunities for surveillance. While the people inside the building will not be constantly watching the parking lot, people in the lot will know that their behavior could be observed. This knowledge not only discourages criminal activity but also makes everyone feel safer.



This development incorporated CPTED principles by orienting residences toward the open space, allowing for natural surveillance.

Actions

1. Continue the collaboration between the planning office and the Police Department to educate the public about Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
2. Prepare design guidelines based on CPTED principles for inclusion in the Comprehensive Manual of Development Policies (CMDP).
3. Consider CPTED principles in the design of county facilities, and in the review of all site plans for new development.

Issue: Fire Safety Inspection Programs

In the 1980’s, following a tragic fire in Baltimore County, legislation was adopted to require that Fire Safety Inspections be conducted as part of the licensing process for all home child care facilities. In conjunction with similar inspection programs for apartments, the county has successfully maintained a low fire death rate for many years.



The Fire Safety Inspection program also includes apartments and all types of business occupancies. At present, over 2,500 apartment complexes and in excess of 17,000 businesses are inspected by the Fire Department. The primary focus of the apartment inspection program is to reduce the loss of life. The conducting of inspections within businesses can reduce the possibility of fires that frequently result in the loss of jobs and property. Continued vigilant enforcement of fire prevention codes and regulations is necessary to prevent or minimize fire hazards to citizens and property.

Actions

1. Ensure that proper time intervals are maintained between Fire Safety Inspections for all applicable building uses and occupancies.
2. Monitor the building industry's technological advancements to ensure occupant and firefighter safety in the event of fire.
3. Continue to enforce and improve local codes, laws, and regulations designed to prevent or minimize fire hazards.

Issue: Prevention of Burn Injury to Children

The best method of treating a burn patient is by preventing the injury from occurring. The Fire Department provides the "Learn not to Burn" message to the young people of Baltimore County to help prevent burn injury and death in children. In 1998, 622 Fire Safety Education programs were held, reaching over 122,000 citizens.

Actions

1. Ensure that every child has received the "Learn not to Burn" program by grade four.
2. Reinforce the need for fire escape planning and practice by conducting fire drills at every school during National Fire Prevention Week.
3. Conduct fire safety activities and contests at the elementary school level to reinforce fire safety practices.

Issue: Prevention and Severity Reduction of Head Injuries in Children

Accidents are the leading cause of death in children. While improvements in emergency medical care have reduced deaths from accidents, head injuries continue to plague our younger citizens. Serious head injury, even if death is averted, can result in a significantly lower quality of life for accident victims. The Fire Department, in partnership with area hospitals, works to reduce head injuries by educating children and their parents about

Continued vigilant enforcement of fire prevention codes and regulations is necessary to prevent or minimize fire hazards to citizens and property.



the importance of using helmets when bike riding and playing sports, and the importance of using child safety restraints in motor vehicles.

Actions

1. Provide accident prevention programs to elementary school students to ensure voluntary compliance with helmet laws.
2. Work cooperatively with area hospitals to educate citizens about the importance of helmets and automobile child safety restraints in preventing accidental injuries.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Healthy communities require individuals and families who function independently and interdependently to identify their common problems and to work together to solve them. Neighborhoods begin to show signs of distress when residents become isolated from each other or become hostile in their interactions. Differences in cultural norms and social values can threaten the social fabric of a community. Poverty diminishes the energy and resources that families need to address their problems.

A neighborhood's strength is also affected by the physical and mental health of its residents. Community residents who are in optimum health are better able to care for themselves and participate in community life. Likewise, the development of preventable diseases, unhealthy behaviors, illnesses that go undetected and untreated, and disabilities that are not minimized, not only cause human suffering but also create dependence, and limit what people can give to others.

Baltimore County has a strong, comprehensive system to address the health and social service needs of its citizens.

Baltimore County has a strong, comprehensive system to address many of the health and social service needs of its citizens. It includes partnerships among government, and for-profit and non-profit organizations. Within county government, health and social services to groups with special needs are primarily provided by the Department of Health, the Department of Social Services (DSS), and the Department of Aging.

POLICIES

- Continue to ensure that services are effective, efficient, and responsive.
- Continue to anticipate and address issues that could affect vulnerable segments of the population, particularly children and seniors.

ISSUES AND ACTIONS



Several issues are likely to have a big impact on public health and social services in Baltimore County during the next decade: the continuing rapid growth of the county's senior population; the gap between health costs and affordability for many county families; the nationwide emphasis on efficiency in the delivery of health and human services; and fundamental changes in the national approach to social welfare.

Issue: Expanding Services for Seniors

In 1998, there were an estimated 106,903 citizens over 65 years of age in Baltimore County, who represent 14.8% of the total population. The number of seniors is increasing and the proportion will continue to grow in the short term, accelerating at the beginning of the next decade as the baby boom generation begins to reach maturity. Migration of residents from Baltimore City to Baltimore County will also add more seniors to the county's population. In addition, the percentage of the senior population that is 85 years of age or older is increasing as changes in health care, nutrition, and services result in longer life spans.

This growth in the number of seniors will result in a greater need for services, placing more demands on the Department of Aging and other agencies that assist senior citizens (Map 11). Because of the growth in the number of very old seniors, these agencies will see more demand from frail seniors who are living independently (not in institutions). In addition, as the baby boomers become seniors, the county will see a new generation of senior citizens with different demands and expectations.

The development of a continuum of care that allows seniors to remain at least semi-independently in the community as long as possible rather than entering an institution has long been a goal of advocates for seniors. Not only is it typically better in terms of the individual elderly person's sense of well-being to remain in the community, but it costs less to provide services in the community than it does in an institution. In addition, seniors are increasingly looking for alternative housing options that meet their needs and enable them to continue living independently as long as possible. New multi-family housing designed for seniors can respond to this demand, but such intensive development can have a large impact on residential communities and community infrastructure.



The demand for services to senior citizens will increase as the elderly population grows.

York County, Pennsylvania

Carroll County

URDL
● Senior Center

Harford County

Mt. Carmel

83

Jacksonville

Cockeysville

Reisterstown

795

695

Bykota

Parkville

Seven Oaks

95

Liberty

695

Pikesville

83

Baltimore City

Overlea-Fullerton

695

Victory Villa

Rosedale

702

Essex

695

Ateaze

Fleming

Edgemere

Chesapeake Bay

Howard County



1 0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Data Sources:
Roads: Baltimore Metropolitan Council (1:24000)
Senior Centers: Baltimore County
Department of Aging (1:24000)
Baltimore County Office of Planning
OIT - GIS Technical Services

Lansdowne-
Baltimore
Highlands

95

895

695

Anne Arundel County

Map 11
Senior Centers

Actions

1. Prepare a comprehensive plan assessing the current and future needs of senior county residents for housing, transportation, adult day care, and other services.
2. Create policies and incentives to encourage the private market to develop affordable housing for seniors, including assisted housing.
3. Amend the zoning regulations to encourage the development of senior housing along commercial corridors.

